

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /097 W
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P R 080535Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 675
INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 5426

PASS AID/OFDA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UNHCR SREF BG BM
SUBJECT: REPATRIATION OF BURMESE REFUGEES: FIRST MOVEMENT ON
AUGUST 31

1. WHILE THE FIRST REPATRIATION OF BURMESE REFUGEES TOOK PLACE AS SCHEDULED ON AUGUST 31, THERE WERE DIFFICULTIES WHICH RESULTED IN A CONSIDERABLY SMALLER NUMBER OF REPATRIATIONS THAN PLANNED. SINCE THE UNHCR PLANS TO PLAY DOWN THESE INITIAL PROBLEMS IN THE HOPE THAT THEY DO NOT PORTEND MORE SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN THE FUTURE, IT IS REQUESTED THAT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION BE HELD CLOSELY, AT LEAST UNTIL THE UNHCR OFFICIALLY CONVEYS IT TO US.

2. UNDP REPRESENTATIVE ZAGORIN AND UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE KAHAUT, BOTH ASKING THAT THE INFORMATION BE PROTECTED, SEPARATELY GAVE THE AMBASSADOR BRIEF REPORTS ON THE INITIAL REPATRIATION. AT THE START THERE HAD BEEN COMPETITION AMONG REFUGEES FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE INCLUDED IN THE FIRST GROUP TO BE REPATRIATED AND SOME 400 REFUGEES WERE CANDIDATES FOR SELECTION FOR THE FIRST GROUP OF
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200. AT THE LAST MINUTE, HOWEVER, THE BURMESE MEMBERS OF THE REPATRIATION COMMISSION EXAMINED THE 200 REFUGEES WHO HAD BEEN SELECTED AND FOUND THAT ONLY 91 HAD PROPER DOCUMENTS AND WERE THEREFORE ELIGIBLE TO MOVE ON AUGUST 31. THEN FOR SOME UNEXPLAINED REASON, IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE 91 SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR DEPARTURE AFTER DARKNESS ON THE EVENING OF AUGUST 30. THE APPARENT NEED FOR ACTIVITY UNDER COVER OF

DARKNESS FRIGHTENED SOME OF THE REFUGEES AND SO THE
TOTAL NUMBER OF THOSE ACTUALLY REPATRIATED THE NEXT
DAY WAS ONLY 50. THE REPATRIATION NONETHELESS TOOK
PLACE WITHOUT FURTHER DIFFICULTY, AND THE REFUGEES
WERE WARMLY WELCOMED BY BOTH BURMESE OFFICIALS AND
A UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE FROM RANGOON ON THE OTHER SIDE
OF THE BORDER. THE NEXT REPATRIATION IS SCHEDULED FOR
SEPTEMBER 15.
SCHNEIDER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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